

lives and billions of U.S. dollars have been spent in the war in Iraq. This war has dangerously overstretched our military and preoccupied our country for almost 3 years now, and it still has no end in sight.

And after all this, what a tragedy and disaster it will be if the real winner in this war is not the Iraqi people nor a more secure and democratic Middle East but rather Iran, a country that supports terrorism and opposes most of what we stand for. Yet today this possible scenario is exactly what we face.

Iran has used our preoccupation in Iraq to its advantage. While we have searched for nonexistent weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, Iran has pursued its own nuclear ambitions. Now, with its decision to resume uranium enrichment, Iran is dangerously closer to having the capability to produce nuclear weapons. And press reports today link Iran's supposedly peaceful nuclear program to its military work on high explosives and missiles.

At the same time, Iran has deeply insinuated itself in Iraq. It has taken advantage of Iraq's porous borders and is supporting anti-American efforts there. Its goal is to promote a Shiite-dominated anti-American state that can strengthen Iran's military, economic and political power in the region.

But even before its latest nuclear pursuits and involvement in Iraq, Iran's actions have been seriously troubling. It has pursued dangerous chemical, biological, and ballistic missile capabilities; supported terrorists; and undermined the Middle East peace process.

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Amidst all of this, Iran's leaders have escalated their anti-Semitic rhetoric, threatening to wipe Israel off the map.

Yet, rather than handle Iran's nuclear situation and involvement in Iraq early and decisively with a sophisticated policy that also addresses the broader problems posed by the country, this administration largely relied on the Europeans to sort this thing out. As a result, the nuclear situation is now an international crisis, and we risk having a radical anti-American regime armed with nuclear weapons entrenched as the dominant power in the Middle East.

We simply cannot let this happen. Iran must not acquire a nuclear weapon. It must respect Iraq's sovereignty, and it must become a constructive member of the international community. While cooperation with our allies and strategic partners is critical, the U.S. must take the lead here. The agreement brokered by Secretary Rice this week to report Iran to the U.N. Security Council is encouraging, but action by the council is uncertain and may not resolve the nuclear crisis or much else. The administration must put forth the necessary plan, and Congress must do its part. Today, the House Armed Services Committee held a hearing on this matter and will do more.

There are no simple answers or easy solutions, but one thing is clear: the administration, with Congress, must be more engaged and must get this right. Other countries will be closely watching this situation, and there are serious implications for the security of our Nation, stability in the Middle East and the nonproliferation regime.

We must address the immediate nuclear crisis, but we must also account for the complexity of the situation and broader, long-term issues involved; and we must consider all tools at our disposal. Yet there are limits to what we can accomplish militarily, and sweeping sanctions could cause more harm than good. Still, there are many tools available that this administration has, unfortunately, failed to utilize effectively or at all.

Here are some of them: we should actively support the IAEA's efforts. We should pursue more focused and vigorous diplomacy and encourage China, Russia, and India to play key roles. We should develop necessary human intelligence capabilities.

We should cultivate U.S. support among the Iranian population and substantially increase democracy promotion efforts that encourage the population to demand more moderate leadership. Specifically, we should increase communication through TV, radio, and the Internet. We should convey a coordinated U.S. policy. We should widely disseminate information about the regime's repression and corruption. We should provide effective assistance to Iranian dissidents and pro-democracy NGOs here in the United States.

We should increase cultural, academic, and professional opportunities for Iran's youth and women. Additionally, we should consider "smart sanctions," as well as incentives that would target Iran's leadership, avoid harming the Iranian population and have strong international support. For example, we should sanction overseas assets of corrupt leaders.

Also, we should encourage Lebanon to disarm Hezbollah, which Iran uses to reject power. We should limit Iran's ability to disrupt oil and gas supplies and increase energy prices. This includes reducing the vulnerability of Middle Eastern energy resources to Iranian-backed terrorist attacks and decreasing U.S. reliance on such resources.

We simply cannot allow Iran to emerge as the real winner in the war in Iraq. This must be a top bipartisan priority.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KUHLMAN of New York). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MACK) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. MACK addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

ECONOMIC RESULTS SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take the time of Mr. MACK.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from North Carolina?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I first want to commend the gentleman from Florida (Mr. WELDON) for bringing this exciting news about adult stem cell success to us. Last week, Congresswoman NANCY JOHNSON and I had the opportunity to visit again Wake Forest Medical Center's regenerative medicine program, where they are doing some absolutely wonderful things from adult stem cells, and I hope sometime in the future soon to bring some information about that program.

But, Mr. Speaker, tonight I want to talk about some other good news. While we were working in our districts for the past month, good economic news continued to pour in, thanks to the Republicans' fiscal restraint and pro-growth economic agenda. In fact, our unemployment rate is lower than the average of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s; and earlier this month, the Dow Jones Industrial Average closed above 11,000 for the first time since the 2001 terrorist attacks. In addition, new-home sales reached an all-time high in 2005. Finally, it was just reported that consumer confidence has risen this month to the highest level since June of 2002.

The great economic news flies in the face of the Democrats' message of doom and gloom. Before the district work period, Republicans passed a Deficit Reduction Act, which was a plan to reform the government and yield savings for American taxpayers. Fortunately, today we passed this bill again, modified slightly by the Senate; but it was with no support from the Democrats. Once again, we show that Republicans are indeed the party of fiscal restraint.

Mr. Speaker, Republicans will continue to push for pro-growth economic policies aimed at ensuring that all Americans can realize the American Dream.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DEFAZIO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

COMMENTS ON THE STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take the time of the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO).